

By Loretta Boniti

This year marked clear change in North Carolina's representation in Congress.

North Carolina has been a state divided in Washington for the past several years, one Republican, one Democrat serving the state in the Senate, and almost an even split of Democrats and Republicans serving us in the House.

That is no longer the case.

The 113th Congress was called to order Thursday and oaths of office were administered. It was a new day for a new Congress that has a very similar makeup to the Congress that just adjourned.

But North Carolina bucked that trend.

We've had Republican majorities in the past, but this is the first time that we have seen such a dramatic shift from a Democratic majority to a strong Republican majority, and it went against the national trend," said William Peace University Political Science Professor David McLennan.

North Carolina's congressional delegation had been pretty equal as far as Republican and Democratic representation: Seven Democrats and six Republicans.

But after redistricting in 2010, and a strong conservative movement over the past few years, the split is now nine Republicans and only four Democrats.

"It means that our congressional delegation will have a tilt that goes against the overall politics of the state," said U.S. Rep. David Price.

But for the new members, all Republicans, they said they are excited to get started on the promises they made during the campaign season.

"It is a steep learning curve," said U.S. Rep. George Holding. "I have been trying to jump in with both feet and talk to a number of senior members here who have been around for a long time and seek out their advice."

For those senior members, on the Republican side, they said with nine republicans now sitting in the House for North Carolina, they are hopeful for a united conservative vote.

"With these four new Republicans, it does change a lot of our ability to work together and achieve results here in Washington for the state of North Carolina," said U.S. Rep. Patrick McHenry.

"In light of redistricting, two Democratic representatives chose not to run for reelection – Heath Schuler and Brad Miller. Larry Kissell ran and lost his seat.

All three seats are now held by Republicans.